



A Vision for the Future

Dear Friends of Gates of the Arctic:

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is one of the nation's premiere wilderness areas, protecting 8.4 million acres of free-flowing rivers, glaciated valleys, and rugged peaks in the central Brooks Range. Since "Gates" was established in 1980, the National Park Service (NPS) has worked to protect the area and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy this special landscape. As we look forward, there are a variety of potential impacts to the park's natural and cultural resources and visitor experience. These include plans for roads and access in the region to support of oil, gas, and mineral development, along with improvements for the nearby Dalton Highway. New lands have been included within the park because of a land exchange with the community of Anaktuvuk Pass. Subsistence and recreational use patterns are changing as climate and economic shifts occur.

This winter a NPS planning team is beginning work on amending the park's 24-year-old management plan. The purpose of a general management plan is to guide management of the park's resources, visitors, and facilities. These plans provide a vision for resource preservation and visitor use that best achieve the National Park Service's mandate to preserve resources unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. The Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve *General Management Plan Amendment* will provide direction for stewardship of the park's wilderness. It will also include a wilderness study, which will consider whether or not additional lands within the park should be proposed for wilderness designation.

We invite your participation in this planning effort. Sharing your ideas and concerns for management of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve will help to guide the planning process. If you live in the area, please come to one of the open houses we will be holding this winter where you can learn more about the general management planning process, meet the planning team, and share your views on the future of the park. The locations and dates for the Anchorage and Fairbanks open houses are included in this newsletter. Additional meetings will be held in communities near the park.

In addition to the open houses, you can e-mail your views to Gaar_Planning@nps.gov or through the NPS planning website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/gaar> (click on "General Management Plan - Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve" and then "Open for Public Comment"). Alternatively, you can mail the comment response form that is enclosed in this newsletter.

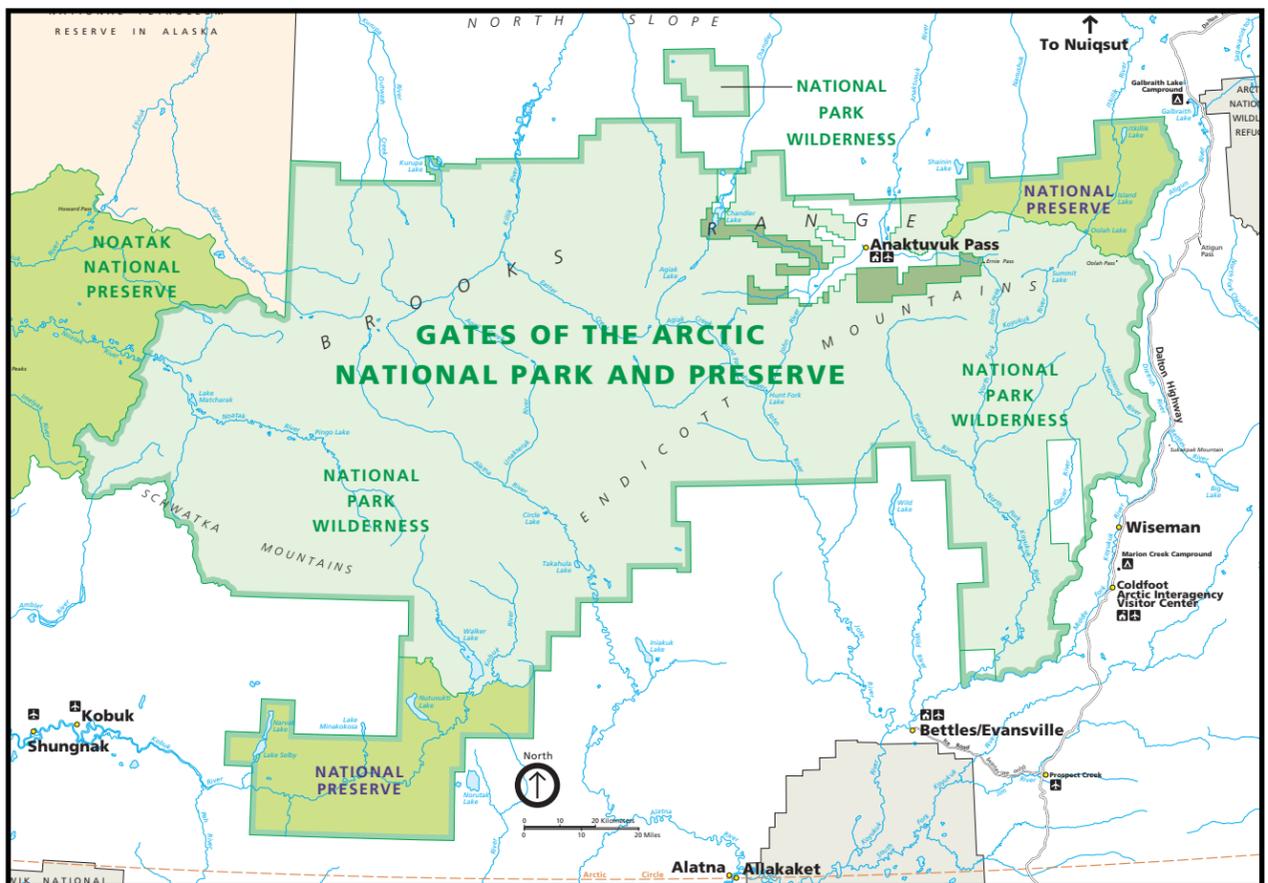
I appreciate your interest in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve and look forward to participating with you in charting the future of this spectacular area.

Sincerely,

Greg Dudgeon

Superintendent

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve



HOW TO BE INVOLVED?

Your ideas and concerns for managing the park are welcomed and encouraged! Comments can be sent by mail, shared at an open house, or submitted electronically (email address listed below). Please consider the questions listed on the enclosed comment form in addition to any other thoughts and ideas. Receiving your input before March 29, 2010, will allow us to learn from you before we continue with the planning for the *General Management Plan Amendment*. Thank you.

Share your comments electronically:
Complete the electronic version of the comment form on the web at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/gaar> (click on "General Management Plan - Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve" and then "Open for Public Comment").

Share your comments at an open house:
You can provide your comments (verbally or in writing) at the upcoming open houses. We invite you to attend one of the open house or village meetings to talk with the planning team firsthand about your ideas, comments, and questions. The open house schedule is listed on the back.

Mail your comment form or letters to:
Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve - GMP Amendment
Fairbanks Administrative Center, 4175 Geist Road,
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Email your input to:
Gaar_Planning@nps.gov

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARK

Congress and the president created Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve to preserve the vast, wild, undeveloped character and environmental integrity of Alaska's central Brooks Range, and to provide opportunities for wilderness recreation and traditional subsistence uses. Specifically, Section 201 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) states that the park shall be managed for the following purposes:

- to maintain the wild and undeveloped character of the area, including opportunities for visitors to experience solitude, and the natural environmental integrity and scenic beauty of the mountains, forelands, rivers, lakes, and other natural features;
- to provide continued opportunities, including reasonable access, for mountain climbing, mountaineering, and other wilderness recreational activities;
- to protect habitat for and the populations of fish and wildlife, including but not limited to caribou, grizzly bears, Dall's sheep, moose, wolves, and raptorial birds;
- to continue subsistence uses by local residents where such uses are traditional, in accordance with the provisions of Title VIII of the act.

While preparing to amend the general management plan, park managers studied the legislation that established the park. Next, the managers discussed what they have learned about the park's natural and cultural resources and human use from managing the park since 1980. Based upon this work, the managers developed the following significance statements related to the park's resources:

1. Gates of the Arctic National Park is acknowledged as the premier wilderness park in the national park system, protecting 8.4 million acres of diverse arctic ecosystems.
2. Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve serves as the headwaters for six Wild Rivers that support natural systems and human activities across northern Alaska.
3. Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve protects a functioning arctic, mountain ecosystem in its entirety, and provides habitat of world importance for naturally occurring plant and animal populations.
4. Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve provides visitors with opportunities for solitude and challenging wilderness adventures within a remote and vast arctic landscape.
5. Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve protects habitats and resources in consultation with local rural residents to provide subsistence opportunities on lands that have supported traditional cultures and local residents.
6. Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve protects a 12,000-year record of human cultural adaptations to high latitude mountain environments and an unbroken tradition of living on the land.

WHAT IS A GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN?

A general management plan serves as the guiding document for the management of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. The plan describes a vision for park managers to achieve during the next 15 to 20 years in preserving the park's natural and cultural resources, providing for subsistence uses and opportunities for quality visitor experiences at the park. A general management plan lays the groundwork for more detailed planning and day-to-day decision-making.

The general management plan amendment will be developed in a way that considers the park as part of larger ecological, cultural, and economic systems. This comprehensive approach includes coordination with other land managers and neighboring communities to ensure that the decisions made through the planning process are widely supported and sustainable over time.

The Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve General Management Plan Amendment will include the following:

- Updating the general management plan so it is consistent with current National Park Service park planning standards.
- Describing resource conditions and visitor experiences that are to be achieved and maintained in the park during the next 15 to 20 years.
- Identifying outstanding remarkable values for the park's designated wild and scenic rivers.
- Addressing visitor use and access issues that have arisen since the 1986 *General Management Plan* was published.
- Providing directions for stewardship of the existing wilderness area, ensuring that the wilderness character is maintained.
- Evaluating eligible nonwilderness portions of the park and preserve for possible inclusion in the national wilderness preservation system.
- Identifying steps that can be taken in the park in response to a changing climate.
- Identifying actions that can be taken to address external threats to the park that have arisen since 1986.
- Identifying the types of development and visitor facilities as needed.
- Identifying indicators and standards for the protection of park resources and the visitor experience.

You're Invited to an Open House!

This winter, the park planning team will host meetings with the public to hear about the ideas, concerns, and thoughts that people would like the planning team to consider as they amend the 1986 management plan. An open house will be held in Anchorage and Fairbanks, Alaska. In addition, park staff will visit many of the local villages that surround the park to discuss ideas and concerns of local residents.

OPEN HOUSE:

Monday, March 1, 2010
4:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Sheraton Anchorage Hotel
Yukon Room
401 East 6th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
907-343-3145

Thursday, March 4, 2010
3:30 pm to 6:30 pm
Morris Thompson Cultural and
Visitors Center
101 Dunkel Street
Fairbanks, Alaska

LOCAL VISIT, DATES TO BE DETERMINED:

Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska

Bettles/Evansville, Alaska

Wiseman, Alaska

Alatna/Allakaket, Alaska

Nuiqsut, Alaska

Kobuk, Alaska

Shungnak, Alaska



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FAIRBANKS ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER
4175 GEIST ROAD
FAIRBANKS, AK 99709-9990

GATES OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE
GMP AMENDMENT